


PS 1236
.B5 C4
1896
Copy 1

Christ on Wall Street

 A Meditation
By John Byer

CHRIST ON WALL STREET

A Meditation.

REVERENTLY INSCRIBED TO THE SAGE OF WHITEHALL,

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY,

The hero, who, breaking the bonds of self-interest, the ties of friends and family
breasted the wild tide of political animosity, and with life in hand
faced infuriated mobs to proclaim truth, justice,
and the rights of mankind.

By JOHN BYER.

LOUISVILLE, KY. :
PRINTED BY JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY.
1896

Page 234
1904

33

46960
'04

Y8A8811 344
22390400 70

INTRODUCTION.

ONE short generation ago this nation was strong with patriotism and heroic devotion. On either side of the great conflict noble men freely gave their lives for their faith. For such manhood to-day we look in vain. A few fast years have changed this people into a brood of selfish money-makers, whose one god is Mammon, and the millionaire the ideal of success in life. Unlike the days of homespun, when children were educated into strong, noble characters to be useful to society, nowadays by the attrition of business they are ground into sharpeners and gamblers to trick the world out of an unearned fortune, and the less they give in return for it the more glory to their acumen. Herein lies the foundation of our commercial dishonesty, our political scoundrelism, and our religious hypocrisy.

True, this generation has been subjected to a strain and temptation never before endured. The giant forces of nature have been given to man for the production of wealth and gratification of his desires. Steam and electricity have changed the face of the world and the currents of mankind, nor is it strange that in this transformation all the safeguards against the accumulation of power in few hands should have been broken down, so that to-day the vested rights, the avenues of wealth, by the gambling of Wall Street, are in the possession of a small circle of men, who, as the Roman Triumvirate, can parcel out the empire betwixt themselves, and with a subservient government, judge, law-maker, and ruler granting them the power of taxation and also the dictation of what measure of labor shall discharge their bonds, they can crush every other class into poverty and slavery.

The reversion of these rights and powers to the people, to whom they justly belong, is the great problem of to-day, implying a struggle and

upturning of society, the issue of which can not be foretold. Shall civilization and personal liberty both endure, or which shall be sacrificed?

The gigantic injustice which robs the great armies of toil of the fruits of their labors, to pour these into the lap of idle, wasteful luxury, must come to an end, either by the slow remedies of legislation or by the shorter route of anarchy and revolution. History commends this fact to those who sneer at the vagaries of populism and at the blind impulses of the great toiling masses, who, feeling that there is some vast wrong in our present condition, are seeking to right it by peaceful means.

This meditation contrasts the hierarchy of Mammon with that kingdom of love and unselfishness preached and inaugurated by the Teacher of Nazareth. Though the vague, undefined terms, divinity and inspiration cause dispute and misunderstanding, yet modern seers by either the transcendental or utilitarian route arrive at the same truth, that the miraculous powers vouchsafed to men by modern science must be used according to Christ's example, not for self-indulgence or vainglory, but for the good of all, and especially for the relief of the poor and oppressed; moreover, that only the moral laws ennniated in the sublime Sermon on the Mount can hold society together and bring about the kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth.

CHRIST ON WALL STREET.

SPLENDOR of unclouded sunlight shone upon the city's crest,
The Atlantic's golden gateway to the Empire of the West.
There beneath the horologe dial Time with warning finger stood,
Pointed to the Zenith index marking noontide's highest flood,
While the great bell in the tower rang its numbers clear and loud,
But its Angelus unheeded flew above that bustling crowd.
For no lull of summer noonday came upon that busy street,
Current of its life kept pulsing on in furious fever heat.
While I stood as rustic stranger from the moving world apart
Where with frowning glance the minster looks adown the golden mart
As colossal dial-gnomon, spire and cross their shadow spread
Far beneath on tomb of marble, a memorial of the dead,
And above that mausoleum, as though it had risen there,
Stood a form in sculptured marble—outlined 'gainst the shadowed air,
With that brow whose glowing aureole lit the painted window shrine,
Loftiest ideal of manhood, artist dream of face divine
'Lumed it into clearer vision, with life's colors growing warm
As though hallowed dream in marble wakened into living form
Stood he there beside his temple, towering o'er that busy mart
CHRIST himself with godlike vision gazing in a nation's heart.

What was there outspread before Him? What meant all this bustling strife?
Was this swarming hive incited by the nobler aims of life?
Was this seething world-brain scheming some new better path to find
To the lands of joy and gladness, wherein should be led mankind?
Were the giants of this people gathered in this central place,
Stoutest hearts filled with devotion to advance the human race,
Greatest minds with souls as noble striving for a people's good,
Filling up the horn of plenty for sad Labor's hungry brood?
Or strove here the fine ambition to write high a noble name
That the world should read with reverence on the temple front of Fame?
Nay! indeed! Far other motive that fierce concourse underlaid,
And their highest rule of action was the greedy law of trade—
Getting most for what is given, by deceitful lie or stealth
Over-reaching weaker brethren to attain ill-gotten wealth.
Each man blowing golden bubbles, with their brilliance to entice
And ensnare the greedy glances of the eyes of Avarice.
Here the trader flaunts his promise, and with luring bait he lies
As the subtle spider weaving meshes for unwary flies.

Plundering the hands of Labor of the first-fruits of their toil,
 Taking by the law of strongest, as the tyrant takes his spoil.
 Here the vultures flock together, and the strong prey on the weak;
 Here the golden feast is given to the sharpest claw and beak;
 The survival of the keenest,—law of hungry brutal rage
 Is the same law here that governs highest point of Christian age.
 Life and all its finer purpose, tuned to one low grovelling note,
 That intones its greedy gospel from loud Mammon's brazen throat.
 Is this what Christ should have taught us—this the golden rule and plan—
 Let him that is greatest 'mongst you do most for his fellow man?
 Christ, who gave men their best treasures with the hopes that life illumine,
 Took for pay a homeless living and a criminal's death doom.

In this nation's center, is this noblest scene it can afford
 To the clear inerrant vision of the Christ it calls its Lord?
 This the child of hopeful ages—youngest heir of Christendom—
 Where His Faith should be transplanted, here to find its cherished home?
 What the boast of His religion? What are names and symbols worth?
 "When the Son of Man returneth shall he find Faith on the earth?"
 Yea, a Faith in God, in Justice, love for all the true and good,
 Faith that trusts in one great Father, makes all men one brotherhood;
 Faith that finds a nobler mission than to pamper pride and greed,
 Faith that helps the weaker brother, Faith that follows Christ indeed;
 Faith that teaches self-denial—virtue of heroic cast—
 For the world has need of heroes more than in the savage Past.
 Not the Romaunt's mail-clad champion, righting wrongs with iron hand,
 But the stronger moral hero who against Time's drift can stand
 Firmly, breasting that fierce current—Mammon o'er the world has rolled,
 Gulphing every nobler passion in the one wild rush for gold.
 "Get gold—with it you can purchase souls and bodies of your kind;
 Be good to yourself and gather all that sense can ask or find.
 God is good unto the greedy—take all in the loaded plate—
 I am not my brother's keeper—leave the hindmost to his fate.
 Sate your soul with pleasure, have all that this world can give;
 There is naught beyond the senses—live with but one life to live."
 This is their one Faith, their Gospel—this the great divine command
 To the minds that from this center rule and govern all this land.
 Is it strange that sorrow's shadow mantles o'er his godlike face,
 And that brow of Christ should darken as he looks upon this place?
 For these men are yet called Christians. Ah! the blasphemy and shame
 That a den of thieves and robbers should be shielded 'neath His name!

Aye! beneath the varnished surface and society's veneer
 Of legality and custom what foul wrongs and crimes appear—
 Shapes of men sleeked o'er with polish, coming smug upon the mart
 To purloin the wealth of others with a devil's wily art;
 And hypocrisy's smooth music, charming victims in their toils;
 Then, alike the crawling serpent, strangling them in slimy coils.

Or, as tigers and hyenas struggling fierce with clutching hold
 On each other's throats and heart chords to wring out the life-blood gold,
 Call this commerce! nay, 'tis warfare, and the wretchedest of wars,
 This of stealth and plunder wherein Mammon takes the place of Mars.
 Fiends of the midnight murder have no colder, blacker blood
 Than these men who drown their brethren in dark ruin's gulphing flood.
 In their central den of Bedlam, like wild beasts within their cage,
 Men changed into frenzied demons fill the air with howling rage,
 Selfish, black malignant passion leering in each hungry face,
 Blasphemies of God and Justice fume sulphureous through the place.
 E'en the sunlight that out yonder smiles over fields and forests green
 Dim and dismal grows in falling twixt the walls that shade this scene,
 Aye—a lurid Pandemonium seemed this vision—strange to tell,
 Christ stood with his holy temple here hard by the gates of Hell.

“Blessed be the poor and blessed they for truth who suffer wrong,
 Blessed be the meek and humble, unto them shall earth belong,
 Blest, the pure in heart and spirit, who give guile and greed no place
 Nor the world's vain crooked wisdom, they shall see God face to face.”
 Echoes of Christ's voice and blessings, from that mountain summit come
 Down the ages and the arches of Time's great cathedral dome:

“Cursed the tyrant and the oppressor, cursed the sons of lust and pride,
 Cursed be they who strive for power o'er their fellow men to ride,
 Cursed be the money-seekers, who their souls to Mammon sell,
 They indeed shall find their Kingdom—but that Kingdom is of Hell.”

Back and forth the sea of faces surges,—strange and motley crew,
 Everywhere the pinched-up features, hungry eyes of Wandering Jew,
 Him who bade the Christ to move on, lest he for a moment stop
 With sad Calvary's death procession that small business of his shop.
 Vain the appeal of human suffering, or of godlike sacrifice
 To a soul and vision blinded by the dreams of avarice,
 Mean and narrowed eye-sight fastened down by grovelling greed and lust,
 Heaven or earth shows it naught nobler than a heap of golden dust.

Aye, the type is still undying. Down the ages he appears
 With his wrinkled, hungry visage sharpened by the rolling years.
 Where'er Mammon builds his temple in the crowded market place
 There comes Priest Ahasuerus with his hooked and bearded face,
 All the human changed to vulture, for the harpy's prey in wait,
 Living on the bones of dead men with a greed no gorge can sate.
 Yet with doom of unrest driven, as old Tantalus accursed
 Reaching still for that which ever yet eludes his craving thirst,
 Stricken by the curse, Christ's anguish lay upon his craven soul,
 Words in fiery traces written on its parched and wrinkled scroll:

“Thou and like thee yet shall move on driven by a deathless doom
 Down the world's dark, dreary ages—through its night of haunted gloom,
 Till the dawn of that glad morning when unto mine heritage,
 I return with light and glory to illumine its golden age.”

Dark and solemn looms the question. All these structures vast and grand
 Rising to such height and splendor, are they built on solid land
 Of God's sure eternal justice with its stern unchanging laws?
 If not, surely then beneath them wait the earthquake's yawning jaws.
 Wrongs, outrages, and injustice, do they 'neath these temples lurk;
 Do the toiling hands that rear them reap the fruit of their own work?
 Riches earned by burdened millions, by what rule of justice brought
 Here to feed luxurious idlers, for whose work the world owes naught.
 "Thou shalt eat bread by thy labor; yea, by toil of thine own hand."
 From the closing gates in Eden, God himself spake this command.
 His strong justice yet remaineth, and his judgments fall at last
 On the tyrants and oppressors who reap where they have not cast.
 They that rob the toil of others, though they flourish for a time,
 Yet clear in the Book of Doomsday is recorded every crime;
 There the dark account will gather usury down through the years,
 And the payment check be written with their children's blood and tears.

Once again His brow Immortal seemed with holy passion moved
 As He wept o'er that fair city—the Jerusalem He loved—
 When His heart was sorely wounded that the love which in it yearned
 Unto mankind and his people was by them derided, spurned.
 When they turned not at His pleading, but to pride and self held fast,
 And to that old road of ruin leading downward in the past;
 When he saw with prophet's vision gathering doom of coming years
 His sublime and godlike pity overflowed in human tears.
 From that hill whereon He rested, gazing on the city walls,
 Through the centuries and silence still His voice of sorrow calls:
 "O Jerusalem, how often would I have thy children brought
 'Neath thy brooding wings of parent, but in vain, for ye would not;
 Ye have slain the hearts that loved you, ye have chosen your own fate;
 Now the time nears when your houses shall be left you desolate;
 Toppling to their own destruction, these proud temples ye have built
 Shall be crushed beneath their burden of oppression, crime, and guilt.
 Not one stone left on another. Then in ashen gloom o'ercast
 Shall the noonday sun be darkened by the deep volcano blast.
 In the mountain's secret places, in the desert's lonely path,
 Ye shall vainly seek to hide you from that judgment day of wrath.
 Yet though this wild storm of vengeance blast with desolation wide
 Passing through the fiery ordeal, still a remnant shall abide
 Hoping—waiting till the ages shall a dawn of promise bring,
 When through portals of that morning comes in glory Christ your King
 Unto His mild reign of mercy, ye will turn with glad acclaim,
 Crying—Blessed he who cometh in God's just and holy name."

CHRIST AT THE CARNIVAL.

Night had stolen Daylight's splendor to illumine the masker's hall,
 Fashion, pride, and wealth there gathered for the closing Carnival.
 There came masque and mime and pageant—all that art to sense affords,
 Golden warp of light was woven through with music's roseate chords.
 Full-blown flowers—the charms of women 'round that circle ope'd to light
 Flesh and blood with passion glowing, shrink not from obtrusive sight.
 All to sense was consecrated; pulse with hot blood throbbing rife,
 Higher intellect submerging in the warm instinct of life,
 Strange! Could Nature, thrust out rudely from the wide door, come again
 In the lofty temple window midst the highest caste of men?
 Has tradition of long ages, from the far halls of the East
 Handed down this celebration of Astarte's sensual feast?
 Nay! they tell us that the church-plays of the medieval age
 Have the carnival begotten and the modern drama's page.
 But no longer a Madonna forms its central light and soul,
 Virgin-mother of a Christ-child crowned with love's pure aureole;
 Highest spiritual ideal, by which Art and Music strove
 To regenerate human passion, to ennoble human love.
 Nature thrust out, yet returnant, her lust worship starts afresh;
 Virgin gives place to Astarte, Spirit yielding unto flesh;
 Vaunted Light of modern era focused to this central aim
 To illumine sensuous beauty—to enkindle passion's flame.

Art arranged its living pictures. Fairest sea-hall in the earth,
 Crystal-sparkling, blazed with diamonds, waited Aphrodite's birth.
 In the rose-dawn from the sea-foam, she should rise with Nature's own
 Garment of the gauzy rose-mist 'round her unveiled beauty thrown.
 Every eager eye was centered, keenly fastened on the scene,
 Every hungry heart was waiting for its feast on beauty's queen;
 All were stilled in hush expectant for this climax of the night,
 But a strange, unearthly vision dawned on their bewildered sight:
 With a sharp and startling discord rose a cross bestained with blood,
 And beside it, in life's image, Christ of Nazareth there stood,
 Clad in that same robe of purple that was rent on Calvary,
 And his weary sandals covered with the dust of Galilee;
 Pensive brow with pain was pallid, and His silent wistful stare,
 Freight with world-weight of sorrow, held at pause the startled air;
 Looked He as some godlike hero, who had died his land to save,
 Comes in spirit to His people—finds them dancing o'er His grave.

Why this sudden sharp intrusion? This is not Religion's place.
 Yea! this is your fondest worship—highest temple of your race.
 Here ye bring your hearts and treasures, in full lavish sacrifice,
 To your gods of lust and pleasure—aye! unto the demon, vice.
 Ye have wrongly turned the abundance God hath given for all mankind
 To this altar where lewd Belial keeps his brazen priestess shrined.
 Well ye know ye who here lavish ill-gained gold to feed your lust,
 Thousands of your brethren languish, hungry with their ashen crust.
 E'en in shadow of this temple, 'neath the blaze its splendors flaunt,
 In the cavern gloom thereunder stalk the specters of grim Want.
 Crouching by its darkened hearthstone, poverty with hands bechilled
 Dreads the next morn's hunger, knowing naught wherewith it may be filled.
 Then dreams of the treasures squandered this luxurious vice to feed,
 And to fill the costly cravings Nature and indulgence breed
 In the debauchee and idler, to whose riot waste are thrown
 The abundance and the harvests their own hands have never sown;
 Wealth wrung from the toiling myriads and brought here this stage to rear
 Where your pride may strut a moment through its golden atmosphere,
 But behind the silken curtains that around this drama fall
 Stand the furies with their firebrands waiting Nemesis' dread call,
 And doom lurks in no far distance. Look around you—pause and think
 How your glittering hall is toppling on the steep volcano brink;
 In the murky clouds beneath you hear the seething vapors hiss,
 See the red-hot cone emerging o'er gloom-mantled city Dis!
 There are hordes of Want and Labor forging in the fires of hate
 Instruments of ghastly terror that the hours of vengeance wait.
 Look down in the smoldering furnace; then dauce on in heedless trust,
 But between you and that fire-lake stretches thin deceptive crust.
 Laugh on! After us the deluge. Others, danced till Doom came by,
 And the death shriek of their ruin shrills down through the century.
 Aye! the mills of God grind slowly; yet they grind unheard—unseen,
 And long ages of their grinding ground the gory guillotine.

On the dim shore of the deluge loomed up Babel's haughty tower,
 Where the proud perched on its summit mocked at th' Almighty power;
 O'er the common herd high lifted, safe secure in lofty place,
 They should smile at storm and deluge sweeping off the human race.
 But God sent confusion on them—in their hearts, and hopes estranged
 From those they owned not as brethren, life and thought and language changed,
 Comprehending not each other, with no bond of love or trust,
 Soon the structure they had builded fell and crumbled into dust;
 Scattered by Almighty fiat, down upon earth's lowly breast,
 Stripped of pride, they took their places on a level with the rest.
 Yet, unmindful of the warning, every era, every race,
 Builds its Babel; flies its flaunting pride in the Almighty's face
 Till His brow its thunder gathers and His frowns of vengeance flash
 Into lightning—then the storm-cloud sweeps down all in ruin's crash.

Albeit cut down and uprooted, covered by the drift of years,
 Despotism's poison upas, ever in new growth appears
 In the soil of rank ambition prone to weeds of pride and vice.
 Toil with vigilance eternal, yet is Liberty's dear price.
 Since the giant powers of Nature under man's control have passed,
 Social fabric, life, law, custom are in modern mold recast,
 And the world by steam and lightning in one vast machine is made
 Enginery of steel and iron linking all its marts of trade,
 While its hands of myriad workers harnessed to the iron trace
 By the whip of hunger driven forward in the fiercest race,
 And the old fire of ambition urges on with keenest goad,
 Stretching human nerve and sinew to the limit of their load
 To grind out the golden treasures for some idle, spendthrift waste,
 Riches, luxuries, and comforts that the workers never taste.
 E'en as Egypt's fierce taskmaster drove with domineering will
 Men like manikins of iron tramping on the stern tread-mill.
 Now again the fierce slave-driver comes with heavy iron hand,
 Lording o'er the thousand menials, forced to cringe 'neath his command.
 As Rome's tyrant, feudal baron, Mammon's soulless chivalry,
 Loom gigantic on th' horizon of the twentieth century,
 And the vain conceit yet fills them, that with power of sword and state
 They may thrall the slaving myriads in the bonds of fear and hate.
 But the crushed and trampled spirit will at last rise up in man,
 And society will never hold together on this plan;
 Comes the day when hand of labor at the dead line drops its chain,
 Grasps the sword, turns on its driver striking home with might and main,
 Then come blood and fire and terror, a world frightened stands aghast,
 While its bulwarks, towers, and splendors are swept down 'neath whirlwind blast
 Of a people's righteous fury. But upon whose head should rest
 Blame and ban for blood and ruin, on oppressor or oppressed?

On him who Christ's law had broken, who denied men's brotherhood,
 And above them trod as tyrant—on him be the curse of blood.

Ye who force this fateful conflict, ye whose wealth shall hire the swords
 To beat down the starving myriads, to defend your stolen hoards.
 What though Victory should wait on you, and ye shall in triumph walk
 In procession close behind you, Cæsar and his headsmen stalk,
 And that dreaded "man on horseback" tramples in one common grave,
 Pride and pauper, prince and peasant, levels master with his slave.

Comes the picture of that banquet which set Babylon ablaze,
 When its bad King, proud Belshazzar, filled with wine and wanton craze,
 Gathered all his minions round him in his brilliant palace hall.
 Sharp! his drunken dream was startled by the writing on the wall;
 Yet his preachers salved his conscience with their words of honeyed oil,
 For the rich must have their banquets, though a people groan with toil.

Sleek soothsayers filled with flattery to the King their incense brought
All his world yet moved on smoothly and the writing they read not.

But a Daniel stood before him, sternest he of prophets old,
Read the message God had written and an empire's doom foretold;
"Thou are judged and art found wanting." In that night a bloody hand
Over Babylon's proud city reached the conqueror's flaming brand;

Down the ages through the willows sighing o'er its lonely tomb
Sounds the warning voice of Daniel—"Babel's sins bring Babel's doom."

Why should Babylon's wan specter wreathed in harlotry and crime
Yet affright a people standing in the foremost ranks of Time?
Here no tyrant wields his scepter, freedom holds the sword of right,
Progress leads enthusiast armies upward to the realms of light.
High the cross of Christ stands shining over steeple, spire, and dome,
With the glow of his religion lighting every hearth and home.

Ah! was ever taunt so bitter, ever boast so false and blind,
In the name of Christ and Freedom what foul idols are enshrined?
On the highest dome sits Mammon, on its golden cross astride,
Showering down his dust and lacker o'er a world's vice, sin, and pride;
E'en the inmost sanctuary with hypocrisy is cursed
By the sybarites whose gospel holds Christ's golden rule reversed.
Freedom! when a hundred tyrants all this land in bondage hold,
Reap its harvests for their banquets; outvie Babylon of old.
Never yet the world has witnessed towers of overweening wealth
Like these o'er this plundered people, built by unseen hands of stealth;
But from robbed and hungry myriads comes the murmur of unrest
As low muttering of the storm-cloud gathering in the darkened west;
Soon the wolves that tore the vitals from the proud empires of yore
From their dens of hunger trooping will be prowling 'round the door.
History, like fiery beacon, points its searchlight o'er the way
Where old nations marched on bravely down to ruin and decay,
Of their destiny unconscious, like the path the proverb saith
That seems right unto a people, yet the end thereof is death.

As the beast and reptile kingdoms write their histories in earth's crust
So men's empires leave their records in the layers of grime and dust
Since the day when tyrant Pharaoh followed his retreating slaves;
Laid his army, pride, and chariots 'neath the Red Sea's vengeful waves.
All along Time's ruined highway crumbling broken arches stand
Where wrecks of a once-proud people stare o'er their deserted land.
With a strange bewildered vision, peering through the twilight gloom,
Shrunken phantoms of past grandeur, stalking 'round a broken tomb,
Wondering how their sun of glory set without the hope of dawn,
And the saving health of nations had forever been withdrawn.

From wan windows of decadence peering through Time's smoky haze,
 Can they see the chill that blighted glory of their former days?
 Know the oft-repeated story, how their kings betrayed God's trust,
 Smoothed the paths of pride and riches, ground the poor into the dust,
 Made a mockery of justice, traitors to God's truth and right,
 They alike crime-driven Judas blindly groped down into night.

Must Fate still repeat the story, time bring nations from her womb
 Who the same old road shall travel from the cradle to the tomb?
 From free, happy childhood, onward through the battles men must wage
 To the peace at last that settles in the tyranny of age?
 Must the temple of a nation, builded slowly stone by stone,
 Crush out freedom in its people, grow into a despot's throne?
 Shall this grandest of republics, freedom's loudest vaunted home,
 Follow on its fated pathway through the history of Rome,
 On the road of wealth and splendor, up the mountain's dizzy steep
 To the precipice where over lies dark ruin's vasty deep?
 Aye, perchance! All that is human marches with resistless tread
 Onward o'er the crest of glory to the empire of the dead.

calando.

As a cloudland panorama drifting by a mountain height
 Down the valley disappearing in the dark, low sea of Night;
 So in fate-impelled procession, pageants, peoples pass along,
 Battles, triumphs, splendors, shadows crowd each other in the throng,
 Rank on rank as phantom legions marching through the realms of sleep,
 Gaze askance with eyes averted, yet all silent on they sweep
 Out of shadow into shadow looming forms in darkness fade,
 Heroes, kings, imperial grandeurs—all a moving masquerade.
 When its carnival is over, on sad shores of Lethe's stream,
 What is left of life and glory? Dust and a forgotten dream.

CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR.

What are men that Thou art mindful! Notes that through the sunbeams sift,
 Star-dust of the solar spaces, sweeping through Time's whirling drift
 In the long revolving ages myriad million lives are hurled
 In the drift banks of the darkness, for the forming of a world.
 Why not then dance in the sunshine, while life draws its fleeting breath
Morituri salutamus—one grand vivat to King Death.
 Trip on glibly to the doomsday; let not care build up her nest
 In the heart and hatch her broodlings to crowd joy from out the breast.
 Life so brief—then be it brilliant. If its carnival be short,
 Fill with wassail, wine, and women, let the heart enjoy its sport;
 But one moment in this waltz-whirl halt, and see those colors warm
 Glowing in the silken tissues scarcely hiding beauty's form.
 Know that these same colors shooting from sun-aureoled Iris' bow
 Were woven in the forest foliage of a million years ago;
 Ocean-buried,—lands grew o'er them, continents upon whose crust
 Man's ten thousand generations marched and moldered into dust.
 Yet these fragile films of color have lived on through countless eons,
 Resurrected in the sunlight as the gorgeous anilines
 Round their sister diamond, glowing on warm beauty's breathing breast
 As the rose-veil pinned by Hesper o'er the brow of darkling West.
 If indeed these be eternal, this frail light that clothes the trees
 And the raiment of the lilies, is not man far more than these?
 Shall his form its fires and forces gather but to be destroyed?
 Nay! there's no annihilation, Nature knows no perfect void;
 Out of silence life arises, as some grand symphonic strain
 Grows up in world-stirring splendors, then fades into dark again,
 Yet the vanishing vibrations, lost to ken of eye or ear,
 Somewhere in the star-land echoes, lingering will reappear.
 Death sets final claim to nothing, Death is but the gateway arch
 Through which hosts of Time are passing on their upward, onward march.
 Heart and soul then join those legions that move on for Righteousness.
 Though our mortal dust and ashes pave the roadway, none the less
 All our noble inspirations, love, self-sacrifice, and faith,
 Are eternal and move forward in an ever brightening path
 To the fountains of existence, to the shining golden Throne,
 When we merge into the splendors of the Radiant Unknown;
 In Him we too are immortal; so in nobler strain we sing
Morituri salutamus! Glory to the deathless King.

CHRISTUS RETURNANT.

When the Son of Man returneth shall He find faith on the earth?
 Shall He find a darkened heaven, quenched the star that told His birth?
 Shall He find a ruined vineyard, blasted fruit and withered leaves?
 Shall He find His holy temple turned into a den of thieves?
 Then no longer Christ the lowly, love shall heat to vengeful ire,
 Then shall glow His halo-aureole in a world-consuming fire.
 Yea, then changed with righteous anger into Judge—relentless, stern,
 From His high cloud-throne of judgment His Light shall to Lightning turn.

So 'tis written, but Christ's coming waits no ending, time, or world,
 Brings no thunder-voice of judgment from a sky in fire-cloud furled;
 Waits no hour on Time's great dial marked by prophet's warning hand,
 Nor the trumpet-sounding angel standing over sea and land;
 In no paroxysm of nature that the great world's heart benumbs,
 Nor in earthquake or in whirlwind—in the still, small voice He comes.
 Comes He every hour in judgment, with the blessing or the ban,
 Of a nobler, higher kingdom set up in the soul of man.
 When the voice of pleading ceases, then His sorrow, not His wrath,
 To their own choice dooms the wicked to go down in ruin's path;
 Not in sudden sharp transition, but the slowly hardening heart
 Hears a long and mournful cadence echoing the word "Depart."
 While the vision of its judgment, as a lurid clondland pall
 Hangs above and gathers darkness, till Death's veil close in o'er all,
 As in every flying moment o'er some land the sunset cloud
 Mantles o'er the dying day-god in his blood encrimsoned shroud;
 And the night is ever falling, so the Dies Irae gloom
 O'er some land or heart is creeping with its whisperings of doom.
 And Christ's dooms are self-enforcing, e'en as nature's certain blight
 On life that lives not according to her laws and rules of right.
 Sin, its own elimination, in its lust-fire shall consume
 Coarser life to earth returning, unto nobler life gives room.

As from Winter's death arising every Spring brings fairer bloom,
 Grandeur men and nobler nations still rise o'er the dead world's tomb.
 Wisdom comes with long experience and the Empire of the Past
 Rules the Present with its memories, gives the Future finer cast;
 That it rise above old evils, and to newer forms give place,
 Marching on in evolution to the perfect man and race,
 Forward yet e'en since that era when Savonola strove
 For a Christian republic founded on Christ's law of love,
 Wherein men should join together in a helpful brotherhood
 And the golden rule should bridle selfish greed to general good—
 Bright mirage of a millennium, by the storm-cloud quickly crossed,
 All its hopeful votaries perished; yet the struggle was not lost.

What was left of life or glory? Dust and ashes and a dream?
 Nay, indeed. Truth is eternal, and it rose with brighter gleam
 High above that storm and conflict, blazoned in their martyred blood,
 As the buried cross arising o'er the Pagan empire stood,
 And the Light of Truth and Freedom streaming down from age to age
 Through the maze of history, brighter grows with each succeeding page,
 Flesh and form and substance changing, with decay and death are rife,
 But the spirit is eternal, passing on from life to life,
 Though Time still devours his children, yet their noblest part dies not.
 And all worthy of remembrance stands immortal deed or thought,
 Though the human fail and perish, yet Humanity remains,
 And that gospel Christ hath spoken its full power and force retains
 Yesterday, to-day, forever! He who said, "I am the Truth."
Verbum manet in æternum! Still in His immortal youth
 Stands He in the living Present, grander in its searching sight,
 As the one Supremest Teacher, the Incarnate Light of Light;
 Guided by His torch, the nations unto these last bounds have come
 From the wilds of beast and savage to the heights of Christendom;
 Reaching not the perfect heaven, for perchance throughout all time
 To the far celestial summit heights will yet remain to climb.
 But the glorious city rising midst the palms of Paradise
 Shall not ever be a mirage hung beyond earth's clouded skies;
 But hope's dream of heaven descending shall rest on the solid land,
 And Jerusalem, the golden, upon earth itself shall stand;
 Then shall walls of Zion echo Memnon-like the morning light.
 When that dawn with rose is tinging cloud-wings of the flying night,
 In its glad, millennial radiance hatred, war, and lust shall cease,
 And beneath her vine and fig-tree Righteousness shall dwell with Peace,
 And the Golden Rule prevailing shall to golden age give birth,
 Then the Son of Man his kingdom here shall find upon the earth.

ritornello.

By that forum of day's conflict, passing at the midnight hour,
 Moonlight threw its deeper shadows from the frowning minster tower;
 Mammon and his sordid armies all had vanished from the place—
 Of the day's sad wrecks and ruins there was left no living trace.
 Homeward—he who won his battle, filled with avaricious dreams;
 Homeless—he to wife and children, empty with his ruined schemes.
 Scene of struggle now deserted, every pulse and sound were stilled,
 Not one echo of the tumult that the noonday's dome had filled,
 Yet with moonlight's snowy mantle falling, drifting round his feet,
 All unmoved the Christ of marble looked adown the silent street.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 775 470 1